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Department
of Human
Services

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Tuesday, July 29, 2008

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TOPIC	PAGE
*Day Care	2-6
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	7-10
Domestic Violence	11-12
Food Assistance	13-17
Substance Abuse	18-19
Health Care	20-21



Another audit critical of Mich. child care program

7/29/2008, 11:30 a.m. ET

By **DAVID EGGERT**
The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — For the second straight week, a state audit has been released criticizing Michigan's handling of child care for low-income families.

Auditor General Thomas McTavish said Tuesday the Michigan Department of Human Services potentially made \$231 million in improper and in some cases fraudulent payments to day care providers.

About two-thirds of child care assistance for low-income parents goes to relatives who care for the children or aides who work in children's homes.

State officials, who agree with the audit's recommendations, said they're redesigning the day care program to make improvements.

"We're concerned about the improper use of public dollars that support client efforts to obtain self-sufficiency," DHS Director Ismael Ahmed said in response to the audit, which reviewed records between October 2003 and March 2006.

The report said the state paid for parents who didn't demonstrate a verified need for day care assistance. It also faulted the state for having no controls to prevent fraudulent overbillings, ensure payments were made only to working parents or those in school and make sure payments weren't made to former day care providers who ended up in jail.

After losing staff through early retirement and cuts, the DHS in 2001 began relying on day care providers to bill how many hours they worked. The state automatically paid for those hours. The average payment per child now is \$1.68 an hour.

"It clearly did not work," said Ahmed, who was not the department director seven years ago.

The state still is using the "self-certification" system, but is creating a new program to start in October that also will require low-income parents to report how many hours their children were in day care. Then officials will cross-check what providers and parents have reported.

The department also is backing state House-passed bills pending in the Senate that would, among other things, require day care aides and relative providers to keep time and attendance records for each child in their care.

Tuesday's report followed an audit released last week that found Michigan put thousands of low-income children at risk by authorizing sex offenders and other criminals to provide day care.

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Audit questions Michigan child care payments

By CHRIS CHRISTOFF • FREE PRESS LANSING BUREAU • July 29, 2008

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LANSING — The state improperly paid out an estimated \$231 million to child day care providers — some because of fraud — over a nearly three-year period ending in March of 2006, an audit released today shows.

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The figure could be as high as \$400 million, the audit stated. The state annually pays out \$1.1 billion to child care providers, 65% of that to unlicensed family members, friends or neighbors.

The state auditor general cited numerous shortcomings in the state's ability to monitor proper child care payments. It is the second sharply critical analysis of the Department of Human Services in a week.

In some cases, payments made for child care were unrelated to work of the parents. The federally funded program is largely aimed at providing cheap day care for parents who must work in order to receive welfare benefits.

Last week, [an auditor general report](#) found the child care system during the same period allowed hundreds of convicted criminals, including sex offenders, to receive payments for watching the children of low-income families while their parents worked.

DHS director Ishmael Ahmed said today the department has since made numerous changes to address the improper billings. More than 800 child care providers have been dropped from the state program since last year, and 3,100 cases were referred to law enforcement authorities prosecution.

Ahmed said many of the problems were due to staff shortages that began in 2001 following early retirement buyouts and other cutbacks in the department under Gov. John Engler. That resulted in a 22% reduction in DHS staff, he said.

He noted that the auditor general sampled 58 of 144,179 cases for review.

Ahmed said one factor was that day care providers were allowed to self-report to the state the number of hours they watched children, without state verification. The average state payment for day care is \$1.68 per hour per child, said Lisa Brewer Walraven, director of the state's Office of Early Education and Care.

She said of 22,000 cases investigated in the past five years, \$52.7 million in fraudulent payments was discovered and <http://www.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Audit+questions+Michigan+child+care+p...> 07/29/2008

\$40 million was ordered to be paid back.

Brewer Walraven said the state soon will launch a new system that requires both the day care provider and the parents of day care children to report to the state the number of hours their children spent in child care. That way, the state can cross-check the reported hours.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080729/NEWS06/80729035>

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Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Child care fraud, mistakes may have cost Michigan \$231 million

Gary Heinlein / Detroit News Lansing Bureau

LANSING -- Michigan human services officials, responding to a state audit that found the department may have made as much as \$231 million in improper or fraudulent payments to child care providers, said Tuesday they have new systems to better monitor the payments.

"When I came here, I had a clear direction that the child care system needed reform," said Human Services Director Ismael Ahmed, who was appointed to the post last September by Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

At a press briefing, he laid out a seven-point program for improving the way the department pays for child care needed by public assistance recipients who have jobs. He said the department is using technology with "multiple cross-checks" against payment errors and fraud.

The department pays child care providers -- many of them close relatives or friends of the mothers -- an average of \$1.68 per hour per child, DHS officials said.

An audit released Tuesday said DHS covered child care for parents who didn't verify their need for the assistance. The auditors said the department lacked controls to prevent fraud and over billings.

Ahmed said the audit covered about a three-year period, 2003-2006, before the department began making changes to tighten procedures. The audit based its dollar projections of potential improper payments on a sample of 58 of the 144,179 cases with expenditures totaling \$1.1 billion over that period, he said.

Ahmed said a so-called a "self-certification" system for authorizing child care payments was set up by one of his predecessors in 2001 after the department had experienced a gradual decline of about 22 percent in manpower and found it necessary "to save money and depend on the honesty of people."

"It's clear that system did not work," Ahmed said.

He credited lawmakers for providing more money in the new state budget to help the department hire more people but said that "I would be dishonest if I did not say we are undermanned."

A state audit released a week ago claimed Michigan put thousands of children at risk by authorizing sex offenders and other "unsuitable" day care providers between 2003 and 2006.

The audit said the Department of Human Services shouldn't have licensed, registered or enrolled about 1,900 providers, and said background checks weren't effective in identifying perpetrators of child abuse or neglect, sex offenders and others.

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Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Taylor woman jailed on charges she drove drunk with toddler in car

Mike Martindale / The Detroit News

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP -- A Taylor woman arrested last week for drunk driving after she was found slumped over the wheel of a pickup truck with her 2-year-old son inside waived her right to a pre-trial hearing Tuesday in Bloomfield 48th District Court.

Marlene Chapman, 37, was ordered back to Oakland County Jail in lieu of an increased cash bond of \$50,000 set by District Judge Dian D'Agostini. It is the third drunk driving-related charge for Chapman since 2004. She is also charged with driving on a revoked license and child endangerment.

"I don't dispute my client has a problem," said attorney Dory A. Baron.

Assistant Oakland County Prosecuting attorney Christopher George said Chapman was spotted "staggering and bouncing off walls" at a Lowe's store was found to have a .29 blood-alcohol level when tested -- more than three times the limit considered intoxicated. Her son, while unharmed, had been left alone in the truck while Chapman shopped, George said. The boy's clothing was covered with his vomit inside the vehicle, where the temperature was about 85 degrees.

The case comes just a couple days after a Hazel Park woman was jailed after leaving an 8-month-old baby unattended in a car while shopping in a Kroger store. In 2004, a Southfield woman, Tara Maynor, was sentenced to 12 to 60 years in prison on two counts of second-degree murder after leaving her two children in a car for four hours while she was in a hair salon.

Chapman's case has been assigned to Oakland Circuit Judge Fred Mester.

You can reach Mike Martindale at (248) 647-7226 or mmartindale@detnews.com.

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Mother who drove drunk with 2-year-old bound over for trial

BY EMILIA ASKARI • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • JULY 29, 2008

A Taylor woman appeared in an Oakland County courtroom this morning on charges she operated a vehicle while impaired after police last week found her slumped over the wheel of her truck with her 2-year-old son inside.

Marlene Chapman, 37, waived her right to a pre-trial hearing before 48th District Court Judge Diane D'Agostini. The judge bound Chapman over for a yet to be scheduled Oakland County Circuit Court hearing and Chapman's \$25,000 bond to a \$50,000 cash bond. Chapman faces her third charge in four years of driving a vehicle while impaired; child endangerment and driving with a suspended license.

Jailed since the incident, Chapman was led into court in handcuffs and mouthed "I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I love you," to her husband. He declined comment.

Chapman was arrested Tuesday after a man saw her stumbling and bumping into things in a Lowe's on Telegraph Road in Bloomfield Township. She'd left her son in the car. The man followed Chapman outside and watched her drive to another parking lot and called police. When police arrived, they found Chapman slumped over the wheel and the boy with vomit on his clothes.

Police said Chapman appeared intoxicated and failed field sobriety tests. Police said her blood-alcohol level was measured at .29 — more than three times the legal limit of .08.



July 29, 2008

Lansing employee fired after being charged with sexual assault

Midday update

A 21-year-old Delhi Township man charged with sexually assaulting a 13-year-old girl was fired Monday from his job with one of Lansing's summer youth programs.

Myron Clarence Knox was arraigned Saturday on two counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and another charge of fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct. The victim reported the assault at about 11 p.m. Friday.

City officials say in a press release they learned shortly after Knox's arrest he was a temporary employee with the city's Department of Parks and Recreation summer youth program. Knox worked as an activity leader at Attwood School in Lansing and supervised the victim, according to city officials.

Knox was hired by the department on June 9 after a criminal background check, driving record check and occupational physical examination, according to the city's press release.

City officials say they and the Ingham County Sheriff's Department continue to be in close communication regarding the matter and are coordinating efforts to contact the parents of all the youth who are known to have been under Knox's supervision.

A criminal investigation by the Ingham County Sheriff's Department is ongoing.

Check LSJ.com for more updates.

Jackson man facing charges for alleged sex with teen

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

By Danielle Quisenberry
dquisenberry@citpat.com -- 768-4929

A Jackson man, 31, is facing criminal sexual conduct charges in northern Michigan after police said he had sex with a 14-year-old Cheboygan girl.

Aaron Michael Avery met the girl on the Internet, they talked on cell phones for several months and he drove in mid May to meet her, said Michigan State Police Detective Sgt. Ron Nightingale of the Cheboygan post.

State police from the Jackson post arrested Avery June 26 at his apartment on Wildwood Avenue. He was arraigned the following day in Cheboygan County on charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, accosting a child for immoral purposes and third-degree solicitation of criminal sexual conduct.

First-degree criminal sexual conduct is punishable by a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Avery waived his preliminary exam on July 9 and is to reappear in court Aug. 19. He remains in the Cheboygan County jail on a \$750,000 cash bond, Nightingale said.

Nightingale said Avery drove about four hours north to Cheboygan, southeast of Mackinaw City, picked the girl up from school and had sexual contact with her in a vehicle on a two-track in a remote area of Cheboygan County.

The state police computer crimes unit in Lansing, which had pinpointed Avery as an alleged online child predator, found evidence he was involved with the girl when troopers executed a search warrant June 18 at Avery's home, Nightingale said.

They contacted state police in Cheboygan and officers interviewed the girl, who told them what happened between her and Avery, Nightingale said.

Others corroborated her story, telling police they saw him pick her up from school, the detective said.

Nightingale said the computer crimes unit is continuing to investigate Avery. ``They have evidence he may have been involved in child pornography," he said.

``He could be charged with computer crimes later."

Anyone with information about Avery is encouraged to call the Jackson State Police post at 780-4580. Troopers there will relay the information to the investigating posts, Nightingale said.



GPS devices monitor domestic abusers, stalkers

7/28/2008, 2:08 p.m. ET

By **DAVID EGGERT**
The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Mary Babb was in her SUV last year when her estranged husband slammed into her with his pickup truck. The crash overturned Babb's vehicle and left her suspended upside-down by her seat belt.

As she hung there helplessly, Thomas Babb fired two rounds from a shotgun, killing his wife in front of horrified witnesses outside the office where she worked.

Now Babb's family has lobbied successfully for Michigan to join a growing number of states that have expanded electronic monitoring to include domestic abusers and stalkers.

Before her death, the 30-year-old Babb had filed for divorce and moved out. She changed jobs and obtained a court order protecting her from her husband. But he kept following her.

"She did everything the law provided her, and it wasn't enough," said Mary Babb's brother, Michael Anderson.

Michigan's new law allows judges to order domestic violence suspects to wear GPS devices — even before they go to trial. The idea is to alert victims if alleged abusers are nearby. That measure joins another law signed this month by Gov. Jennifer Granholm that requires paroled prisoners who have been convicted of aggravated stalking to wear GPS tethers.

Authorities and victims will "know exactly where they are," said Harvette Williams, 39, a former real estate agent who sought the law after being stalked for three years by a client. Her stalker was imprisoned in 2006, and will be monitored electronically if he's paroled.

GPS devices have been used for years to monitor sex offenders. But technological advances have now made it possible for the systems to issue warnings by cell phone if the offender gets too close to a specific victim.

Massachusetts adopted a law last year that lets judges require electronic monitoring of people who violate personal protection orders. Michigan, Oklahoma and Hawaii followed suit this year with GPS laws, bringing to 11 the number of states with related measures, said Diane Rosenfeld, a lecturer at Harvard Law School who proposed the Massachusetts law.

Similar legislation is awaiting the governor's signature in Illinois. The proposed law there is named for Cindy Bischof, who was gunned down in March by her ex-boyfriend at the suburban Chicago real estate office where she worked.

After Mary Babb's death in 2007, authorities searched for technology that could call victims' cell phone if offenders come within a certain distance or approached their home or office. Victims also receive a call when the offender leaves the area.

Protection orders traditionally have sought to protect victims in their homes, at work or their children's school. But GPS technology now allows "zones" of protection to move with the victims if they wear a device.

"This returns some of the power and self-control of victims' own lives back to them," said Michigan Rep. Bill Caul, a Republican who sponsored a GPS bill.

The GPS technology has limitations if there's poor cell phone coverage, and zones have to be large enough so victims can be alerted in time to react. But the systems also help police corroborate whether an offender violated a protective order.

In response to Michigan's new law, parole officers recently fitted GPS devices on 39 parolees who served

prison time for aggravated stalking.

Authorities already had the option of ordering paroled stalkers to wear monitoring devices because nothing explicitly prohibited the practice. But advocates hope the new GPS laws raise awareness about the technology and encourage judges to use the monitoring devices in more domestic violence cases.

Thomas Babb, who pleaded no contest to murder and other charges, is serving a 52- to 77-year prison sentence in the slaying of his wife.

"This could happen to your niece or your daughter, or to your sister, your neighbor, your friend or even your mother," said Mary Babb's aunt, Paula Andresen of LeRoy. "No one deserves to live in such fear and terror. We have to do everything possible to change this, to make laws to protect the victims."

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Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Meals on Wheels struggles to deal with gas prices

Jim Lynch / The Detroit News

WARREN -- Karla Jaeger just added a second route to her Friday shifts as a driver for Meals on Wheels. And these days, that's not something every volunteer can afford to do.

Fuel costs are putting pressure on Meals on Wheels home food-delivery programs throughout Metro Detroit and could cause program officials and volunteers to make some tough choices, such as reducing deliveries or delivering frozen instead of hot food.

For her part, Jaeger feels lucky to be able to do more these days, rather than less.

"I'm very fortunate," said the Warren resident, whose usual route takes her through the city's northwest section. "The prices might have affected some of the other drivers already, so I count my blessings."

Macomb County officials say their program has been hit hard. In an effort to retain volunteers, program officials recently increased the per-mile reimbursement rate for volunteers from 32 cents to 40 cents per mile. But that may not be enough to stave off program cuts, they say.

The county may have to reduce the number of days meals are delivered, and some hot meals may have to be replaced with frozen meals, which last longer, said Frank Taylor, director of the county's community services agency. In addition, high-risk seniors with nutrition issues are often given a second meal, which may have to be cut.

Macomb's program has roughly 1,100 volunteers and delivers 1,600 meals a day to 1,400 people. Frances Crooks, 87, said she appreciates the warm meal that's delivered five days a week to the Warren senior apartment complex where she lives with her husband. She's received the meal assistance for the past two years.

"I depend on it because I can't cook every day," Crooks said. Wayne County has seen a reduction in Meals on Wheels volunteers, said Senior Citizen Services Director Kevin Kelley, but it hasn't affected the county's ability to deliver meals. Wayne County provides hot meals for nearly 2,500 homebound seniors and 1,000 others in group settings.

About 1,200 volunteers drive about 328,000 miles of roads annually to deliver meals. Two years ago, the agency increased the mileage reimbursement from 31 cents to 36 cents per mile.

"We have had some fall-off (in volunteers), but luckily it hasn't hurt our ability to get meals out at this point," Kelley said. "We do hear a lot of people are having a hard time delivering the meals. Some people are able to donate their time, but some people need the reimbursement."

In Oakland County, nine agencies divvy up Meals on Wheels responsibilities.

Bloomfield Township Senior Services, for example, is responsible for Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township, West Bloomfield and Orchard Lake.

So far, the volunteers have not been adversely impacted by gas prices. They have a roster of 110 volunteers and serve about 50 people a day, Monday through Friday.

"We have not had any calls from volunteers saying the gas prices are an issue," said Christine Tvaroha, director of senior services for Bloomfield Township. "We've been blessed in that people are continuing to deliver the meals. We've even had people call to ask if they could volunteer because they think gas prices may be an issue for us."

In Livingston County, some volunteers have had to drop out because of high gas prices, officials said.

To keep volunteer drivers who deliver about 1,200 meals daily to 700 homebound seniors in Livingston and western Oakland County, the Meals on Wheels program started paying some volunteers 40 cents per mile to keep them aboard, said Christina Lovgren, director of the Livingston County Senior Nutrition Program.

"Some people have quit because of the high gas prices. They can't afford it anymore. We're not only asking people to donate their time, but their gas as well," she said.

Staff Writers Shawn D. Lewis, Darren Nichols and Valerie Olander contributed to this story.

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Girl Scout donating pigs she raised to food bank

Posted by [Claire Cummings | Jackson Citizen Patriot](#)

July 29, 2008 09:16AM

Categories: [Top Photos](#)



Scott Stoner / For the Citizen Patriot Ellen Sponsler works on her family's Parma farm with her father, Mark Sponsler, to feed her pigs that will be donated to a food bank. Ellen, 17, will earn a Gold Award from the Girl Scouts for donating the meat.

Family friends sometimes joke that on the verge of death, they want to spend their last days on the Sponsler farm in Parma.

Part of the reason is 17-year-old Ellen Sponsler, who has become somewhat of a pig whisperer known for her gentleness toward animals who spend their final days roaming her backyard.

Her family raises steer, chickens, sheep and rabbits, but the pigs hold a special place in her heart.

She taught her first pig to sit for dog biscuits.

"They're smarter than dogs," she said. "They just have to have the training."

For months, the Western High School senior has cared for her young pigs. She raised 15 pigs — each a hybrid of Hampshire and Yorkshire breeds — from 20 pounds to more than 200 pounds each.

But in a few weeks, Sponsler will send them to a local food bank to be slaughtered, turning nearly a year's work into 3,000 pounds of food for the hungry. The deed will earn her the Gold Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout can achieve.

On a recent afternoon, Sponsler hopped the short fence of a pen behind her home to check feed and water and ensure there were enough mud holes to go around.

Her dusty boots landed inside the pen and the pigs scattered away from the feeder, giving her room to serve them an afternoon snack.

Sponsler has participated for five years in 4-H, which offers buyers of fair animals the option of donating them to food banks. Sponsler decided to bypass the auction and send the pigs straight to charity.

"We are just thrilled that Ellen has such an understanding of the needs of her community," Holly Cavinder, community outreach coordinator for the Food Bank of South Central Michigan, said in a statement. "This donation of pigs to the food bank will help feed the hungry in Jackson County, providing something that is lacking for many individuals who struggle with food security."

Sponsler, whose project is called "From Farm to Freezer: Pork Production," is donating to the food bank's Meating the Need program that allows people and businesses to donate meat.

The organization distributed more than 716,000 pounds of food in Jackson County last year, but as food and fuel costs rise, Cavinder said, food donations are down. And meat is donated least often.

Raising pigs is a smelly, dirty job, but Sponsler said the hardest part of the project was getting financial backing to feed the animals to market weight, especially with the high cost of corn.

Luckily, she said, her provider gave her half the corn for free and she received other donations from relatives, friends and even the family dentist, to cover about two-thirds of the project. Each pig costs about \$150 to feed.

Last week, her father, Mark, backed up his black Silverado pickup, steering the attached wooden trailer up to the fence while Sponsler's younger sister, Kirsten, stood off to the side.

"(Kirsten) only does rabbits," Ellen Sponsler said. "She doesn't like bigger animals."

"Good!" Sponsler shouted to her father from the fence, dressed in a light-blue plaid shirt and jeans, her brown hair pulled in a ponytail to one side.

She grabbed one of the cream-colored bags among the 2,000 pounds of feed sitting in the trailer — enough to keep the pigs satisfied for 10 days.

"Ellen has a special touch with animals," said her father, a self-described former "city slicker."

As far as Bonnie Bartlett knows, Sponsler's project is the first of its kind for the local Girl Scouts troop.

"I was thoroughly excited," said Bartlett, membership manager of the Girl Scouts-Irish Hills Council. "It was just innovative, and it's going to help a lot of people."

The Gold Award is just as much work as the boys' Eagle Scout honor but does not get as much recognition, Bartlett said.

About 5 percent of eligible registered Girl Scouts nationwide last year received the Gold Award and about the same percentage of boys got an Eagle Scout badge.

Only about three in 150 Jackson County girls receive the gold each year, Bartlett said.

But to achieve the coveted award, Sponsler will sever ties with animals she has fed and cared for so they can become food.

"It's always sad, but you know that's what they are raised for," Sponsler said.

"Greater good," her dad added.

"Yeah," Sponsler said. "Greater good."

Citizens offer ideas to curb drugs; Portage residents respond after heroin overdose death

Posted by [scrone](#) July 29, 2008 11:30AM

PORTAGE -- How can Portage residents keep their children from using drugs?

Parents could conduct random drug and alcohol tests on their teens, some said during a two-hour forum Monday.

Schools could sponsor talks by young, recovered addicts, others said.

The community should provide healthy outlets for bored adolescents, a teenager urged.

About 60 people gathered at Portage City Hall for the brainstorming session, motivated by the June death of an 18-year-old Portage woman from a heroin overdose. It was the city's fifth heroin death of a young person in the past few years, according to Portage police officials.

Monday's meeting, designed as a follow-up to one earlier this month, let participants talk about "better ideas, better solutions, better strategies," said Shirley Johnson, Portage Public Schools board president.

The forum began with a review of existing prevention, enforcement and treatment programs. Ideas included creating an online list of resources linked to the city and Portage schools' Web sites, and perhaps even creating a Facebook or MySpace page for teens with the information.

It also was noted that Prevention Works, a local nonprofit agency, already has a countywide task force researching youth substance abuse and strategizing about ways to address the issue. That group plans to hold town hall meetings in Portage and Kalamazoo during September to gather community input.

The conversation then turned to what more can or should be done.

Two high school students on the panel began by saying that an underlying issue is teen boredom.

"Many times, the reason kids gets into these drugs is because they don't have anything else to do," said Fatima Mirza, a member of the city's Youth Advisory Committee and a student at Portage Central High School.

They recommended that parents and other adults work on keeping teens busy, and perhaps create more community programs or a youth center to provide teens with healthy activities.

Dr. Michael Liepman, a Kalamazoo psychiatrist who specializes in addiction, said parents also need to send a strong message that any kind of teen substance abuse, including drinking, is unacceptable.

To reinforce that message, he suggested parents take sobriety pledges themselves while their children are adolescents to set a good example, and they should lock up and monitor any prescription narcotics, such as Vicodin, in their homes.

Liepman and Guy Golomb, director of prevention services at Gryphon Place, also urged parents to take advantage of over-the-counter drug tests for their children.

Emalee Sabo, a June graduate of Portage Central High School, endorsed that idea. "If my parents did it to me, I wouldn't have a problem with it," she said. "I'd respect them because I know they mean business."

Portage Mayor Peter Strazdas said his staff will compile and distribute a list of the ideas suggested Monday, adding that both the city and school district are ready to take action.

"I think this is the most productive conversation we've had in this community in a long, long time," he said.

Contact Julie Mack at jmack@kalamazoogazette.com or 388-8578.

Categories: [Breaking News](#), [Top Stories](#)

Comments

Footer

July 28, 2008

NUMBER OF ADULTS WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE INCREASES IN MICHIGAN

The percentage of adults without health insurance in Michigan has increased slightly, but remains below the national average, a report issued by the Department of Community Health said. However, the report also showed that the number of uninsured children in Michigan fell and is far lower than the national average.

The [report](#) reviewed data up to 2006, the most recent year available, so any impact of job losses the state has endured this year and last were not be factored into the statistics.

Non-elderly residents in Michigan without health insurance totaled 12 percent in 2006, a slight increase from 2005, when 11.6 percent did not have insurance, but still is less than the 13.1 percent without insurance in 2002.

Nationally, 17.9 percent of adult, non-elderly people did not have health insurance. That was up from 17.2 percent in 2005.

Even at 12 percent, Michigan had one of the lower percentages of adults without insurance, at the 11th lowest. Minnesota had the lowest percentage at 9.6 percent while Texas had the highest at 26.8 percent.

But for the same year, the number of children without health insurance fell in Michigan to 4.7 percent from 5 percent in 2005. At the same time nationally, 11.7 percent of children were without health insurance in 2006, up from 10.9 percent in 2005.

Parents have access to a number of programs to provide insurance for children.

Among adults with insurance, most have the coverage through their employers. A total of 69.2 percent of adults in Michigan have insurance through their employers. Nationally, the average is 62.7 percent. The state with the highest percentage was New Hampshire 75.7 percent and the state with the lowest percentage was New Mexico at 52.5 percent.

Only 6.4 percent of adults in Michigan purchase individual insurance coverage.

The report, which is now issued annually, was issued last month.



July 29, 2008

Cancer resource center opening in Lansing today

Christine Rook
Lansing State Journal

Lansing gets a new cancer resource center today with free help for cancer patients with and without health insurance.

The American Cancer Society and Michigan State University's Breslin Cancer Center are opening a cancer resource unit near Ingham Regional Medical Center's Greenlawn campus in south Lansing.

Cancer society officials say their next closest all-volunteer resource site is in Flint.

An open house is set today at 11 a.m. to unveil the all-volunteer center, which will offer services such as support groups, rides to treatment and health management kits that are personalized to a specific patient's needs.

Hours for the new resource center are 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

Check www.lsj.com for updates.
